

Message Text

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50

ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ADP-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01

DODE-00 IO-09 FDRE-00 AGR-20 OMB-01 INT-08 COME-00

EB-11 IGA-02 PC-15 USIA-15 RSR-01 TRSE-00 HEW-08 SR-02

ORM-03 SPM-01 /177 W

----- 065238

P R 271220Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1465

INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY FORT LAMY

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 763

AFDROUGHT

OUAGADOUGOU FOR SPENCER

ROME FOR FODAG

EO 11652: GDS

SUBJECT: STABILIZING DEMAND ON US PL 480 COMMODITIES

REF: STATE 167586

SUMMARY: GIRM ALREADY SELLING ABOUT 50 PERCENT OF ALL
EMERGENCY GRAIN RECEIVED AT NOMINAL PRICE OF CFAF 15
(OUGUIYA 3) PER KILO; PROCEEDS USED DEFRAID GRAIN TRANSPORT
COSTS. REMAINING 50 PERCENT DISTRIBUTED FREE. UPWARD ADJUSTMENT
IN CURRENT 15 CFAF PRICE MIGHT BE POSSIBLE, BUT IT SEEMS
DOUBTFUL THAT 50-50 RATIO OF FREE VERSUS PAID DISTRIBUTION CAN
BE ALTERED SIGNIFICANTLY. WILL RAISE POINTS REFTEL SOONEST
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WITH GIRM RELIEF COORDINATOR (MINHEALTH) AND REPORT RESULTS.

1. GIRM HAS CONTROLLED DIRECTLY ALL IMPORTS, DISTRIBUTION, AND SALES OF GRAIN (WITH EXCEPTION RICE, WHICH MONOPOLY OF GIRM-CONTROLLED TRADING COMPANY) SINCE MID-1972. DECISION CONCERNING WHO RECEIVES FREE GRAIN AND WHO PAYS CONTINUES TO BE MADE ON AD HOC BASIS BY PREFECTS, WHO CONTROL RATIONING SYSTEM IN EACH ADMINISTRATIVE SUB-DIVISION. ACCORDING TO GIRM RELIEF COORDINATOR (MINHEALTH) ABOUT 50 PERCENT OF GRAIN FROM ALL SOURCES (INCLUDING GIRM COMMERCIAL INPUTS) IS DISTRIBUTED FREE. PERSONS JUDGED ABLE TO PAY ARE CHARGED 15 CFAF (THREE OUGUIYA) PER KILO, REGARDLESS OF TYPE OF GRAIN. EARNINGS FROM SALES ARE USED TO DEFRAID GRAIN TRANSPORT COSTS, BUT DO NOT BEGIN COVER TOTAL TRANSPORT EXPENSES. IN NORMAL YEARS, MAURITANIAN RETAIL SORGHUM PRICES--FOR INSTANCE-- RANGE FROM 15 TO 30 CFAF PER KILO, NOT INCLUDING TRANSPORT COSTS. A PRICE HIKE WOULD BRING IN SOME EXTRA REVENUE COVER HEAVY TRANSPORT COSTS EMERGENCY SUPPLIES OR OTHER DROUGHT-RELATED PROGRAMS; HOWEVER, GIVEN FACT THAT ONLY ABOUT 20,000 MAURITANIANS ARE WAGE EARNERS INDICATES THAT INCREASE IN PERCENTAGE OF GRAIN SOLD PROBABLY UNATTAINABLE. QUESTION OF PRICE RISE IS ALSO POLITICALLY SENSITIVE. OPPONENTS OF THE OULD DADDAH REGIME HAVE LONG DEMANDED GIRM MAKE FREE DISTRIBUTION ALL RPT ALL AVAILABLE GRAIN SUPPLIES.

2. ACCORDING TO INFORMATION DEVELOPED FROM CDC NUTRITIONAL SURVEY, INSTANCES OF INEQUITABLE GRAIN DISTRIBUTION SEEM RESULT INACCURATE POPULATION ESTIMATES MADE BY PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS WHO OFTEN UNAWARE OF HEAVY INFLUX OF NOMADS INTO THEIR DISTRICTS. MOREOVER, GIRM HAS ACTIVELY--THOUGH NOT ALWAYS SUCCESSFULLY--ENCOURAGED NOMADS CAMP AROUND CITIES AND TOWNS WHERE EMERGENCY GRAIN AND WATER AVAILABLE. AGAIN, NUTRITIONAL SURVEY RESULTS SEEM INDICATE THAT NOMADS LIVING ON OUTSKIRTS MAJOR TOWNS ARE IN FAR BETTER SHAPE THAN THOSE WHO CAMP EVEN 25 OR 30 KILOMETERS INTO BUSH. PROBLEMS IN GIVING PRIORITY TO RURAL FOOD DISTRIBUTION CENTER AROUND DEARTH OF TRANSPORT AT DISPOSAL PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS, VAST DISTANCES INVOLVED AND LACK OF SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL.

3. EMERGENCY SALES PROGRAM WOULD OBVIOUSLY EASE TRANSITION INTO GRAIN STABILIZATION PROGRAM--WHICH A NEW CONCEPT HERE. THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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EMBASSY AND OTHER DONOR REPS HAVE ALSO BEEN ATTEMPTING STIMULATE GIRM INTEREST IN FOOD-FOR-WORK AND OTHER SELF-HELP PROJECTS HELP PREVENT DOLE MENTALITY FROM GROWING UP AMONG NOMADS NOW CLUSTERED AROUND NOUAKCHOTT AND OTHER MAJOR URBAN CENTERS. THOUGH OFFICIALS HERE APPRECIATE OUR CONCERNS, THEY SO FAR PREFER TO WAIT UNTIL POPULATION SHIFTS STABILIZE BEFORE IMPLEMENTING URBAN SELF-HELP PROGRAMS. (SEE NOUAKCHOTT 693.)

4. WILL DISCUSS POINTS RAISED REFTTEL SOONEST WITH MINHEALTH,
AND REPORT RESULTS.
SHURTLEFF

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NNN

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